

In April of 2005, the Pentagon along with assistance from the Department of Homeland Security spied on student protesters at UC Santa Cruz and UC Berkley. The students were participating in peaceful anti-war protests. DHS observed the students for suspicious activity and declared that the "threat" was "credible".

"I was shocked to learn that the Department of Homeland Security was at the heart of the spying incident at UC Santa Cruz," said Farr. "The right to express differing opinions was one of the founding principles of this country. The voices of the American people must always be heard- whether this administration agrees with them or not."

"No matter which way you slice this, it is a clear violation of these students civil rights. It is disturbing that the DHS wasted government time and money on this."

The Farr letter asks the Homeland Security Committee to investigate under what authority does DHS have the power to engage in domestic spying, what directives they may have been given by others and to demand under what criteria does DHS label students exercising their Constitutional rights to speech and to peaceably assemble a "credible threat".

The text of the letter is below:

*Dear Ranking Member Thompson:*

*It is widespread knowledge that the civil liberties of students at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), were violated as part of the DOD TALON program. If you recall, the media reported - and the Pentagon later confirmed - that a student protest against military recruiters at UCSC in April 2005 was not only observed for suspicious activity but that the "threat" was declared "credible". This use of government time and money to spy on youthful Americans exercising their constitutional freedoms is a clear violation of civil rights.*

*The American Civil Liberties Union this week uncovered that in fact it was the Department of Homeland Security that relayed information on the students to the Pentagon. The information from the two Defense Department TALON bulletins, from April 4 and April 20, 2005, assert that the information was provided to the DoD "to alert commanders and staff to potential terrorist activity or apprise them of other force protection issues." It is particularly alarming that Homeland Security was involved in the Pentagon spying on students at UC Santa Cruz*

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*Homeland Security should be our port in the storm, the department we can count on to secure us during times of national emergency. Instead, we find out it's just another covert operation of the intelligence community.*

*I ask you, as Ranking Member on the Homeland Security Committee, to investigate under what authority does DHS have the power to engage in domestic spying? I would also ask that the Committee elicit from DHS officials what directives they may have been given by others (DOD? The White House?) to target college campuses and traditional student campus organizations. Finally, I feel it is appropriate for the Committee to demand under what criteria DHS labels students exercising their Constitutional rights to speech and to peaceably assemble a "credible threat".*

*Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter.*

*Sincerely,*